

Stateline Midwest

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THE MIDWESTERN OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

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Pursuing healthy birth outcomes

At MLC meeting, legislators learn how states can help save babies’ and mothers’ lives from before birth through infancy

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

In pursuit of healthy birth outcomes, nothing grabs attention like a personal story. So when Lezlie Mestdagh, outreach coordinator for the Count the Kicks campaign — an educational effort founded by five Iowa mothers who suffered stillbirths and are determined to prevent that pain for other mothers — showed Midwestern legislators a “Good Morning America” video clip featuring an Iowa couple whose infant daughter was saved by Count the Kicks’ phone app, they applauded.

That video illustrated the heart of Mestdagh’s message to the region’s lawmakers in July at the MLC Annual Meeting: Invest pennies in prevention to save dollars down the road, both in direct costs (stillbirths require greater resources than live births) and indirect costs such as funerals, ongoing counseling, lost income and reduced or delayed employment for parents, and more expensive medical care during subsequent pregnancies.

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are 24,000 stillbirths annually in the U.S. — more than 10 times the number of babies who die from sudden infant death syndrome, she said.

We’ve done a good job reducing SIDS rates; we need to do likewise for stillbirths, Mestdagh said.

“If you invest in stillbirth prevention ... you’re gonna save a lot of money,” she said. “It is not that expensive to save babies.”

Count the Kicks’ free app guides expectant mothers through the process of, literally, counting her fetus’ kicks during the third trimester, tapping a foot icon on the app for each of 10 kicks. After a few days, a “normal” pattern emerges. The pattern diverging from “normal” could indicate a problem and is an indication to call a medical provider. (Moms can also use the app to set counting-time reminders.)

Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen, current chair of the MLC, is one of the five mothers who co-founded Count the Kicks in 2009. She has made “Healthy Birth Outcomes” her MLC Chair’s Initiative for 2017. (A list of other



MLC Chair Iowa Sen. Janet Peterson, at the podium, thanks Dr. Barbara Levy, left, and Lezlie Mestdagh, center, during the MLC’s July 11 plenary session on healthy birth outcomes. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

articles written on this topic can be found at csgmidwest.org).

Mestdagh’s talk on Count the Kicks was preceded by a presentation from Dr. Barbara Levy, vice president of health policy at the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. She implored legislators to not overlook the other side of healthy birth outcomes — the mother’s health and well-being.

Maternal mortality — defined by the World Health Organization as the death

Midwest's stillbirth rates, 2013		
State	# of stillbirths	Stillbirth rate (U.S. rank)
Illinois	936	0.596% (30)
Indiana	491	0.591% (29)
Iowa	171	0.437% (3)
Kansas	176	0.453% (5)
Michigan	575	.0507% (17)
Minnesota	350	0.506% (16)
Nebraska	135	0.571% (22)
North Dakota	56	0.528% (24)
Ohio	888	0.639% (39)
South Dakota	64	0.523% (23)
Wisconsin	343	0.515% (19)
Source: Healthy Birth Day		

of the mother within 42 days of the end of a pregnancy, regardless of cause — is a serious and growing health crisis in the United States, despite the belief that it doesn’t happen here, Levy said.

Citing figures reported in the September 2016 edition of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, Levy said the U.S. maternal mortality ratio

► PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 5

Thank you to MLC meeting participants and contributors

The Midwestern Legislative Conference has met every year since 1945, and its continued success relies on the commitment among the region’s legislators to help plan the event and participate in it.

CSG Midwest, which provides staff support for the MLC, thanks the legislators, meeting speakers and contributors who took part in the Annual Meeting this July in Des Moines, Iowa. Planning for this year’s event was led by Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen, chair of the MLC, along with fellow lawmakers and staff in the Iowa Legislature. The four-day event gives the region’s lawmakers the chance to learn from and share innovative ideas in public policy.

This edition of *Stateline Midwest* highlights various sessions held during the MLC Annual Meeting, as well as actions taken by the region’s legislators. More information is available at csgmidwest.org.

Next year’s MLC Annual Meeting will be held July 15-18 in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Midwestern Legislative Conference
DES MOINES

In July, the six policy committees of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC) held meetings and sessions during the MLC Annual Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. This month’s Issue Briefs (pages 2, 3 and 4) explore some of the issues discussed by the committees.

Criminal Justice & Public Safety

CSG Justice Center experts suggest ways states can remove work barriers for ex-offenders

For individuals returning from jail or prison, meaningful employment is crucial to successful reentry into the community. But getting a job can be challenging for applicants with a criminal record. During a session of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee, experts from The Council of State Governments’ Justice Center discussed actions that policymakers can take to improve employment outcomes. Stephanie Akhter, director of the center’s reentry and employment program, suggested that one role for states is to integrate reentry and employment strategies. Right now, she told lawmakers, efforts to train individuals for work and to help them transition to the community often occur on parallel tracks. A pilot project in Wisconsin (which is receiving support from the Justice Center) provides one example of how states can provide for greater integration of these services: It tailors community-based reentry and vocational programs based on each individual’s risk of reoffending and his or her level of job readiness. Later in the session, Chidi Umez, who manages the Justice Center’s work on criminal records, detailed



state policies that can either help or hinder employment outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals. In the Midwest, Illinois and Minnesota have enacted “ban the box” policies that prohibit all employers from requesting a job applicant’s criminal record until the individual has been selected for an interview or after a conditional offer of employment is made. Ohio, Nebraska and Wisconsin have similar “fair chance” hiring policies that apply only to public employers. Other state laws, however, may keep people with criminal records from entering the workforce. According to the National Inventory of Collateral



Ohio Rep. Nathan Manning and Nebraska Sen. Laura Ebke help lead a session in July of the MLC’s Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee. Manning co-chairs the committee along with Illinois Sen. Mattie Hunter; Ebke is the vice chair. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

Consequences of Conviction (an online tool created by the Justice Center), more than 20,000 state and federal laws restrict employment for people with records. In Illinois, lawmakers have taken steps to remove some of the employment barriers caused by occupational licensing restrictions. Under last year’s HB 5973, for example, the state must now consider “mitigating factors” surrounding a criminal conviction before denying an application for certain occupations. A bill passed this year (SB 1688, awaiting the governor’s signature as of mid-July) expands those provisions to more licensed occupations.

Brief written by Katelyn Tye, staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee. She can be reached at ktye@csg.org.

Health & Human Services

Experts urge holistic approach to stem widespread opioid crisis

Strategies to deal with the rise of opioid abuse and drug overdoses were a focus of state legislators and policy experts who took part in this year’s MLC Health & Human Services Committee meeting. “We can’t prosecute our way out of the problem; there needs to be cooperation between law enforcement and public health,” Kevin Techau, a former U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Iowa, said to lawmakers at the July meeting. Now in private practice, Techau said this holistic approach to fighting the crisis must involve federal, state and local governments. On the law enforcement side, for example, he noted the success of partnerships between the Cedar Rapids Police Department and the federal High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area and Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces. Together, they used local crime statistics to show where illegal drugs such as heroin were coming in to Cedar Rapids; that, in turn, led to more successful prosecutions by the U.S. attorney’s office. On the public health side, Dr. Carri Casteel provided some evidence-based legislative remedies. One is to mandate that prescribers register with and use



The MLC Health & Human Services Committee is led by Illinois Rep. Robyn Gabel and Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon (co-chairs) and Nebraska Sen. Sue Crawford (vice chair). It met on July 9 and 10 in Iowa during the MLC Annual Meeting. (photo: Jeffrey Kash) state-run databases that monitor prescription drug use by individuals. (These prescription drug programs are in place in every Midwestern state, but not every state mandates that prescribers use them.) Another policy strategy is to expand naloxone access to non-medical personnel who have been trained to recognize an overdose and administer the live-saving medication. Casteel suggested, too, that lawmakers look for ways to bolster addiction treatment capacity while also better educating prescribers and pharmacists. Part of the long-term solution to the problem, she said, is changing the culture around prescribing medicine, starting in medical schools. In 2015, 33,000 people died in the United States

Drug overdose deaths in 2015		
State	# of deaths (U.S. rank in parentheses)	% change from 2013
Illinois	1,835 (8)	+16.2%
Indiana	1,245 (17)	+17.0%
Iowa	309 (39)	+12.4%
Kansas	329 (37)	-0.6%
Michigan	1,980 (7)	+27.5%
Minnesota	581 (31)	+11.1%
Nebraska	126 (45)	+7.7%
North Dakota	61 (50)	+205.0%
Ohio	3,310 (2)	+41.0%
South Dakota	65 (49)	+18.2%
Wisconsin	878 (21)	+2.6%

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

from opioid overdoses; nearly half of those cases involved a prescription opioid. The rate of opiate overdose deaths started skyrocketing at the beginning of this decade, fueled mainly by a sharp rise in deaths from heroin (starting in 2010) and synthetic opiates such as fentanyl or tramadol (starting in 2013).

Brief written by Jon Davis, staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Health & Human Services Committee. He can be reached at jdavis@csg.org.

Midwest-Canada Relations

NAFTA renegotiation will be lengthy and complex, trade specialists tell lawmakers

U.S.-Canada relations, and especially a key agreement that binds both countries together, was the subject of a session sponsored in July by the Midwestern Legislative Conference's Midwest-Canada Relations Committee at the MLC Annual Meeting.

With the help of three experts on trade and U.S.-Canada relations, the region's state and provincial lawmakers explored the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement, a trade pact in place for more than 20 years that has eliminated tariffs and increased the volume of trade among Canada, Mexico and the United States.

Donald Trump, as a presidential candidate and now as president, has been critical of the agreement's impact on U.S. jobs, and several months ago, he announced his intention to renegotiate NAFTA. Negotiations are scheduled to begin in August.

"Proper change [to the agreement] will be complicated," Kim Campbell, a businesswoman and past chair of the Canadian Society of Customs Brokers, told lawmakers. She and the other two panelists cautioned that NAFTA negotiations will likely take a long time, and that reaching agreement on a renegotiated trade deal will be difficult.

In the meantime, uncertainty about NAFTA's future has a "very immediate cost" to businesses involved in

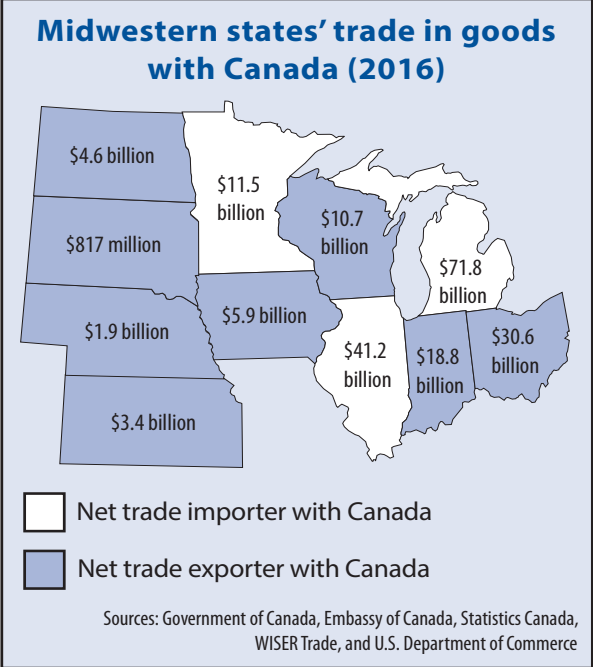


Manitoba Minister Kelvin Goertzen and Indiana Sen. Ed Charbonneau, co-chairs of the MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee, oversee a session on the future of trade in North America. The committee's vice chairs are Michigan Sen. Jim Stamas and Ontario Speaker Dave Levac. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

cross-border trade, said Christopher Sands, director of the Center for Canadian Studies at Johns Hopkins University. These companies have planned and made decisions based on current terms of the agreement.

Sands added that if trade rules among the three countries must be changed, a renegotiation is much preferred to tearing up the agreement and starting over; according to Sands, the latter scenario would lead to "trench warfare," with each issue being "fought agency by agency, sector by sector, and lobbyist by lobbyist."

Another key player this time around will be the U.S. Congress. In the past, it has largely left trade negotiations to presidents and their appointed trade representatives, but the current Trade Promotion Authority legislation (reauthorized in 2015) provides a greater role for the legislative branch — for example,



the formation of special congressional advisory committees and a requirement that the U.S. trade representative provide more information about negotiations.

As a result of these statutory provisions, state leaders will be able to better track proposed changes to NAFTA and their impact on jobs and key economic sectors. In addition, states will have a built-in conduit — their congressional delegation — to express what they want out of any new trade deal, said Jim Dickmeyer, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and a former U.S. consul general in Toronto.

Brief written by Ilene Grossman, CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwest Legislative Conference Midwest-Canada Relations Committee. She can be reached at igrossman@csq.org.

Economic Development

Creating 'entrepreneurship culture' among students can spur business growth, legislators told

In a wide-ranging discussion that touched on ways to build the next generation of entrepreneurs and improve access to capital in rural areas, lawmakers at a July meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Economic Development Committee learned of various state strategies that can help support job and business growth.

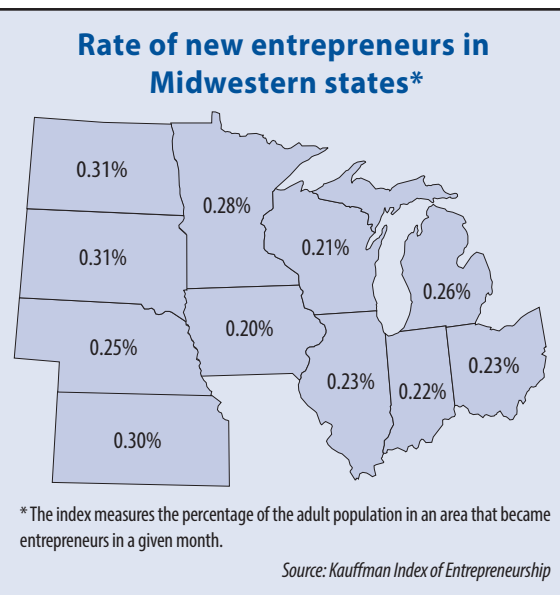
The committee was joined by a four-person panel of experts in economic development.

On entrepreneurship, lawmakers explored the value of exposing young people to the idea of starting new businesses. For example, a program at Iowa State University helps create a culture of entrepreneurship among participating students, and also assists student-initiated enterprises via training, consulting and experiential learning.

"It's the experiential that matters; it's where we see the most success," said Judi Eyles, associate director of ISU's John Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship.

That doesn't mean all or even many of these enterprises will get off the ground. But by exposing more students to entrepreneurship and then providing them with the tools they need, Eyles said, the state has a greater chance of building home-grown businesses.

The university's approach focuses more on technical assistance than on financial support. But within the



entrepreneurial community, one continuing challenge is finding the resources to start and sustain businesses.

In recent years, traditional lending streams have "flatlined," making it more difficult for startup businesses to access the capital they need, said Tony Toups, a partner with Advantage Capital. That is especially true of firms in rural and small communities, he added. (Toups' firm specializes in investing in businesses located in traditionally underserved areas of a state.)

One policy response, then, is to incentivize private investments in entrepreneurs who hire people and build businesses in targeted rural areas and industries. Some states, for example, have begun offering tax cred-



Bill Blazar of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce speaks to the MLC Economic Development Committee as its three-person leadership team looks on: Michigan Sen. Ken Horn, co-chair; South Dakota Sen. Kevin Killer, vice chair; and Illinois Rep. Elgie Sims, co-chair. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

its to these investors in new businesses in rural areas.

Beyond access to capital, local support and an understanding of the value of entrepreneurs can help new businesses thrive, said John Beranek, a community coach with Dakota Resources, which works to build the development capacity of rural communities in South Dakota. It's important for these entrepreneurs not to suffer from isolation in these communities, he said, and also to connect them to existing state resources.

Under the Grow Minnesota! initiative, that state's Chamber of Commerce tries to help by taking a personalized approach: talking to individual business owners about what they need to succeed and then offering follow-up assistance. This customized support could be a model used by states themselves, said Bill Blazar, the Minnesota chamber's senior vice president of public affairs and business development.

Brief written by Laura Tomaka, staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Economic Development Committee. She can be reached at ltomaka@csq.org.

Education

Policies that spur innovation in schools, personalized learning focus of discussion

When teachers and local school administrators think of state laws and departments of education, “innovation” is likely not the first word that comes to mind.

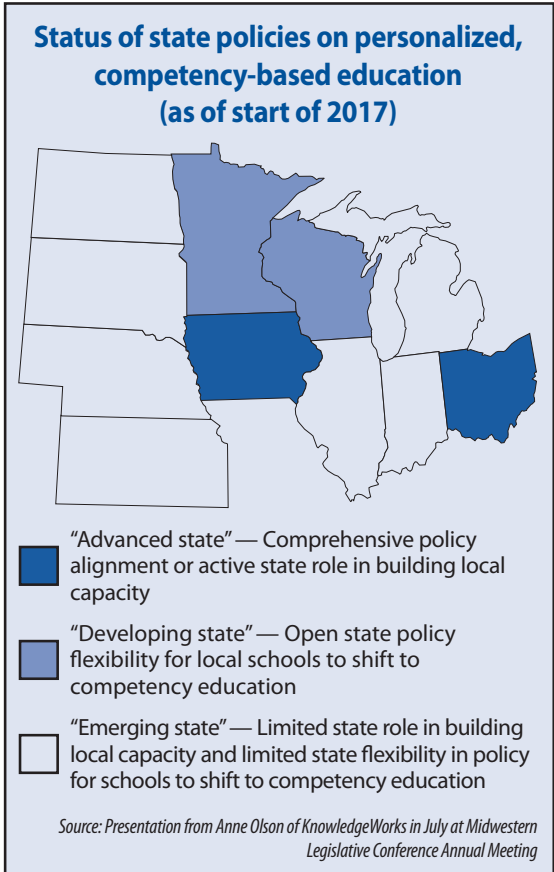
It’s more likely to be “compliance” — how to meet top-down rules that dictate how young people are assessed, for example, or the size and structure of the classes that students are in.

But at a July meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Education Committee, lawmakers learned of new types of state policies that are placing more decisions in the hands of schools, and even the students themselves.

Anne Olson, director of state advocacy for the national organization KnowledgeWorks, singled out two recent approaches in the Midwest, in North Dakota and Ohio.

North Dakota’s public schools and the state’s school superintendent were given additional statutory authority this year with the passage of SB 2186. Under this new law, local school boards can go to the state superintendent with locally developed plans that seek to improve opportunities for students but require existing state rules to be waived. If the plan has buy-in from most parents and teachers and meets a few other criteria, it will be approved.

What makes the language in North Dakota’s law so promising, Olson said, is the duration of the waiver and the amount of leeway given to local communities.



“A lot of states offer waivers, but they say that schools have to come year after year to get them,” Olson said to lawmakers during her presentation. “That becomes really cumbersome.”

The plans in North Dakota can last up to five years and focus on a wide array of education strategies, one of which could be competency-based learning. With this learning model, Olson said, students advance in school not based on time in



The MLC Education Committee is led (from left to right) by Wisconsin Rep. Eric Genrich, vice chair; North Dakota Sen. Kyle Davison, co-chair; and Kansas Rep. Melissa Rooker, co-chair. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

the classroom, but rather on showing a mastery of the subject area.

“Students move on when they’re ready to move on,” she said. Conversely, each student struggling with mastery gets the extra supports that he or she needs.

Competency-based education de-emphasizes grades and lecture-based instruction, Olson said; it instead encourages the use of student-led “passion projects” and “blended learning” (a mix of students working at their own pace with a tablet or other device as well as together in small groups).

In Ohio, competency-based education is the focus of a \$2 million, state-funded pilot program.

While state grants and waivers can help schools experiment with new models of education delivery, Olson said, some laws stymie innovation, including mandates on seat time (the Carnegie unit), class size, grading and the school calendar.

She urged legislators to scrutinize these and other “inhibiting policies.”

Brief written by Tim Anderson, staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Education Committee. He can be reached at tanderson@csg.org.

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Public opinion, government regulation will shape use of gene editing technique in farming

Consumers have welcomed technology in all parts of their life — except not always when it comes to the food that they eat.

For many farmers, this vocal opposition to products made with genetically modified corn or soybeans (or GMOs) has been difficult to accept.

But now a new form of selective breeding is here, and one looming question for the Midwest’s agricultural producers is whether it will be more widely accepted by the public.

The technology is known as “CRISPR,” a gene editing technique that can reduce the cycle of plant breeding from decades to five years. And it is based on native genetic sequences rather than the transgenic material used in GMOs.

“Researchers are moving forward cautiously, as all the wonderful technology from previous methods of transgenic manipulation was not fully realized due to public pushback,” Jeff Wolt, a professor of risk and policy analysis at Iowa State University, told lawmakers who attended a July session of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Agriculture Committee.

CRISPR’s impact on agriculture, in the Midwest and around the world, could be revolutionary —



A packed room of state and provincial legislators take part in a July meeting of the MLC Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. The committee is led by Iowa Sen. Kevin Kinney and Minnesota Rep. Paul Anderson, co-chairs; and Illinois Rep. Norine Hammond, vice chair. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

increasing a crop’s temperature tolerance, reducing the need for inputs, eliminating mycotoxins, and making it tastier or healthier to eat.

At the University of Minnesota, for example, researchers are using CRISPR to reduce the carcinogenic compounds found in potatoes, and to prevent them from browning when cut.

CRISPR could transform animal agriculture as well. Already in Minnesota, a company has edited the genes of Holstein cattle to produce polled (hornless) calves.

“We need to ensure that what we are doing [with CRISPR-related research] is well-communicated and transparent,” Wolt said.

Consumer acceptance is one factor that will determine the future of this new technology in agriculture; another is government regulation.

Minus any new legislation from the U.S. Congress, rulemaking responsibilities will be split mainly among two agencies.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture has authority over plants and seeds, and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authority over foods derived from those plants,” explained Jane DeMarchi, vice president of regulatory affairs for the American Seed Trade Association.

According to Wolt, only breeding methods that include “synthetic or foreign DNA” have been subject to regulation in the past.

But the USDA has begun to shift its regulatory focus from “genetically engineered crops” to “products of biotechnology,” while the FDA is reviewing public comment on how it should regulate gene-edited foods.

For now, it is unclear whether CRISPR products will require additional regulation.

Last year, the USDA decided not to regulate a mushroom and a corn crop that were gene-edited with naturally occurring genes. On the other hand, in January, the FDA proposed that all intentionally altered animals would be regulated as a “new animal drug” and deemed unsafe unless approved.

Brief written by Carolyn Orr, staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. She can be reached at corr@sarl.us.

Levy: Maternal mortality is an overlooked, but solvable, public health problem

(for 48 states and the District of Columbia) rose from 18.8 per 100,000 live births in 2000 to 23.8 in 2014, a 26.6 percent increase.

Moreover, she added, the U.S. is the only industrialized country whose maternal mortality rate is rising; all other countries' rates are dropping.

"We have a higher maternal mortality rate than many Third World countries," Levy said to legislators. "Something is very, very wrong."

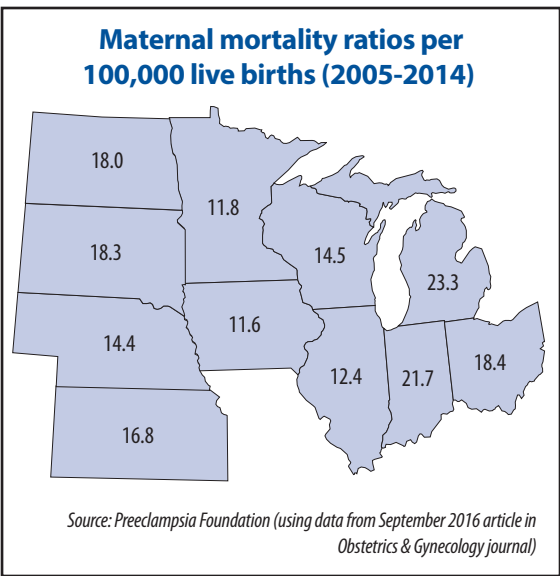
The issue is hard to perceive outside of raw data, because while the national mortality rate is trending in the wrong direction, individual incidents don't happen all that often; for example, a hospital with 5,000 births annually might see a maternal death once every 10 years, Levy said.

The two most prevalent causes of maternal deaths are pre-existing conditions exacerbated by pregnancy (28 percent) and severe bleeding (27 percent). Conditions contributing to maternal mortality can begin in or during pregnancy, and can affect a mother's health up to a year after she gives birth, Levy said.

The study of "epigenetics," or the factors that turn genes on or off, is key to solving that puzzle and, perhaps, also explaining persistent racial disparities in maternal death rates, she added.

While the prevailing hypothesis for those disparities is chronic stress, which is known to affect hormones, blood flow, and other factors, the science isn't in on that yet, she said.

"What happens to the fetus in the uterus turns those genes on and off" and can set a family's genetic course through multiple generations, Levy said.



State legislation can help create the kind of access needed to improve outcomes, however.

California, for example, reduced its maternal mortality rate compared to the U.S. overall rate by 50 percent since mid-2006. The difference was requiring a hemorrhage cart (the equivalent of a cardiac arrest "crash" cart) at medical facilities for births and other quality-improvement initiatives.

If they haven't already done so, Levy said, states should create maternal mortality review committees to look at every incidence of maternal death.

In Michigan, a recently enacted law seeks to ensure that its review committee has access to the relevant

data. Under HB 4235, signed into law in December 2016, physicians and hospitals must report the death of a woman who was pregnant at the time of death or



State policy options for fostering healthy birth outcomes

- ✓ Create maternal, infant and fetal death review committees; ensure they can access the necessary data to recommend changes in medical practice and public policy
- ✓ Establish, fund and promote home visiting programs for at-risk expectant mothers
- ✓ Promote programs such as Count the Kicks that help a mother track the health of her unborn baby
- ✓ Ensure that expectant mothers have access to prenatal care and promote healthy behaviors (smoking cessation, for example)

within one year before her death. The goal of this new law is to provide legislators and health professionals with the information they need to adopt medical practices and policies that prevent maternal deaths.

Meanwhile, the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and its partners launched the Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health to promote better evidence-based maternal care; Illinois and Michigan are the only participating Midwestern states, although Iowa, Ohio and Wisconsin have indicated interest in joining.

"If you don't look into the root causes of these deaths, you'll never affect change," Levy said. ★

This article was written as part of this year's Midwestern Legislative Conference Chair's Initiative of Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen. This initiative, Healthy Birth Outcomes, is examining ideas to improve the health of mothers and their babies.

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State tax collections lagging behind overall growth in economy

Eight years have now passed since the Great Recession rocked state finances, and since that time, state policymakers have had to settle for a modest recovery and still deal with a difficult fiscal environment.

In a July presentation to state legislators, John Hicks, executive director of the National Association of State Budget Officers, detailed just how different — and more challenging — this period has been compared to other post-recession eras.

Since 2011, year-to-year revenue growth in the states has never reached the historic annual average of 5.5 percent, and for fiscal year 2018, the nation’s governors were recommending an increase of only 1.0 percent (and just 0.17 percent in the 11-state Midwest).

“That’s a notable item eight years into a recovery, and it isn’t because we’re cutting taxes and having to balance our budget as a result,” Hicks said during his presentation at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting’s Fiscal Leaders Roundtable.

Instead, this slow rise in state spending reflects a “new normal” in tax collections, the result of only moderate increases in gross domestic product and, on top of that, a gap between changes in U.S. gross domestic product and the taxes being collected by states.

“[States’] revenue streams are growing less than the economy, at least half to a full percentage point off of GDP,” Hicks said. “That didn’t used to happen.”

Why is the discrepancy occurring now?

The answer likely lies somewhere in states’ collections of personal income and sales taxes, which account for 77 percent of general fund revenue.

Potential causes include a decline in the price of tangible goods (thus driving down sales tax revenue), the failure or inability of states to collect taxes from services and Internet sales (both are growing parts of the U.S. economy), and a decision by many taxpayers to delay sales of their stocks in anticipation of possible changes in federal law that would cut the capital gains tax.

In fiscal year 2017, all 11 Midwestern states (and 35 nationally) had to revise their economic forecasts downward and adjust their budgets accordingly.

To the extent that states can spend more, Hicks told lawmakers, that money is disproportionately going to two areas: K-12 education and Medicaid.

“[State agencies] continue to get the dregs or continue to be cut,” he said. “They haven’t recovered from the Great Recession and they won’t. This is permanent.”

Similarly, a smaller portion of state general funds is going to higher education — 9.7 percent in FY 2016 vs. 11.3 percent in FY 2008. Over that same time, Medicaid spending has jumped from 16 percent to 20 percent.

Along with health care and K-12 schools, public pension systems are another big cost driver crowding out other areas of state budgets.

“We as a group of states have reformed our pension plans or created new ones, particularly for new employees — for example, hybrid cash balances, defined contributions, moving away

State general fund spending, FY 2016		
Function	% of total spending	% point change from FY 2008
K-12 education	35.1%	+1.6
Medicaid	20.3%	+4.0
Higher education	9.7%	-1.6
Corrections	6.6%	-0.4
Transportation	0.8%	+0.1
All other	26.2%	-2.2

Source: National Association of State Budget Officers

solely from defined benefit, changing the amount of time it takes to get a full pension,” Hicks said.

“But those changes don’t have a lot of an immediate effect on our pension liabilities. ... We are getting out the checkbook [to pay for those liabilities].”

Article written by Tim Anderson, CSG publications manager. He can be reached at tanderson@csq.org.

Eggers: Technology can aid state workers and the people they serve

The disastrous launch four years ago of Healthcare.gov will never be thought of as a shining example of how governments can “deliver on digital,” but it will be remembered as a turning point, Bill Eggers said in July during a plenary session at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting.

“It ended up being the best thing that ever happened to digital government in America,” Eggers, executive director of Deloitte’s Center for Government Insights, told lawmakers.

“What we saw were more changes in the two years after than we had seen probably in the previous decade and a half.”

Errors, outages and technical problems plagued the rollout of that website — the digital tool for Americans to get health insurance via the Affordable Care Act.

Though the nation’s political leaders may not be technology experts, Eggers said, they knew one thing: They didn’t want another Healthcare.gov to happen under their watch. And the federal government’s response to the crisis provides lessons for states on how to improve their own delivery of services, he added.

Agencies put a greater emphasis on hiring technology specialists, did a better job of overseeing IT procurement, and created new partnerships with the private sector (for example, engineers at companies such as Facebook and Google were brought in to fix and improve Healthcare.gov).

Most important of all, Eggers said, there became almost “a religious focus on the end user.” In the case of state government, that end user is any citizen or business of the state.

“Don’t make them adapt to you; you adapt to them,” he said in urging state leaders to employ technologies that help simplify the process for complying with government regulations or applying for government programs such as food

stamps or Medicaid. In addition, the use of data and digital designs can help “nudge” end users to make decisions that a government wants.

Eggers gave the example of New Mexico and its recent success in limiting improper payments of unemployment benefits (nationwide, he said, \$1 of every \$8 goes to someone ineligible for them).

First, the state analyzed data to identify the causes of the improper payments — in the case of unemployment benefits, an applicant’s self-reporting of the reason for losing a job, the amount of his or her earnings, and his or her efforts to find a new job. New Mexico then changed the behavior of end users (those making jobless claims) by altering the online application for unemployment benefits.

For example, a pop-up screen appears showing a copy of the letter that will be sent to the individual’s former employer — an incentive for the applicant to be truthful (only people who lose a job through no fault of their own are eligible for benefits).

In another part of the online application, users are told that most people are truthful about their earnings. They must then sign their initials verifying the accuracy of their reported earnings.

Lastly, to ensure that individuals are fulfilling their obligation to find work while receiving unemployment benefits, New Mexico began requiring detailed job-search plans while also providing more online employment resources.

“There was a 50 percent reduction in fraud,” Eggers said. “That’s pretty amazing, and it was done without having to send out inspectors or doing anything like that.”

It just took a nudge.

More noticeable changes may lie ahead for state governments and their workers. According to Eggers, within the next decade, “25 percent of all activities done by people in government are going to be automated” thanks to the rise in artificial intelligence.

“You create a bot to do a lot of things that are manual and don’t have a lot of value — for instance, copying and pasting, opening emails and attachments, filling in forms,” he said.

That does not necessarily mean workers will lose their jobs, but it does mean much less paperwork and a change in the nature of their jobs.

“You’re freeing up 25 percent of everyone’s time, and then what you do is use [technology] to get those workers a lot more data and information to make better decisions,” he said. “That is a super-empowered worker.”

Article written by Tim Anderson, CSG Midwest publications manager. He can be reached at tanderson@csq.org.



Bill Eggers talks about the power of technology to transform government at this year’s Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

Legislators challenged to take on policies associated with aging population

In a comprehensive speech on demographics that touched on trends ranging from the elderly to family formation, Linda Jacobsen ended her talk to the Midwest’s legislators with a policy message: Act now in order to meet the unavoidable health care and workforce challenges that lie ahead.

“The greatest opportunity is to invest today to increase the future productive capacity of our children, because that is the best way to help offset the costs of our aging population,” Jacobsen, vice president of U.S. programs for the nonpartisan Population Reference Bureau, said in July at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting.

Already today, about 15 percent of the nation’s population is 65 and older (Those rates are higher in five Midwestern states: Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin). That percentage will rise to 21 percent by 2030 and 24 percent by 2060.

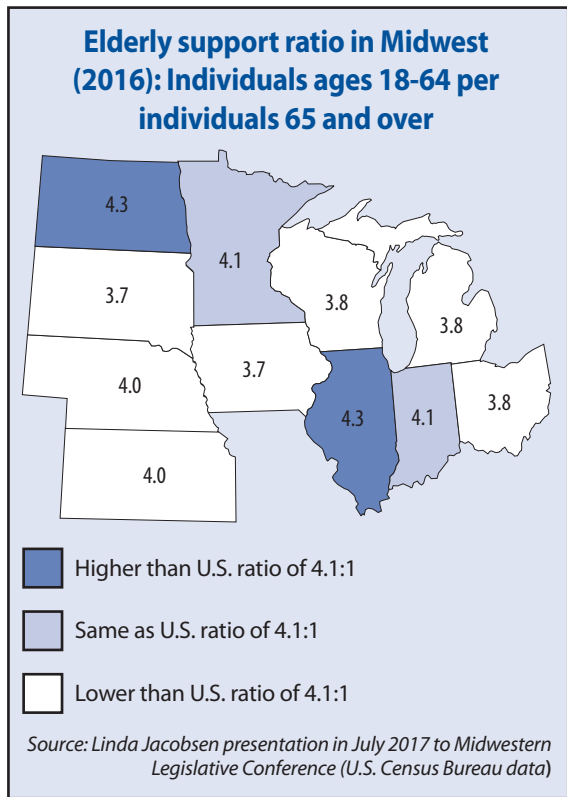
But those population numbers tell only part of the story. More than one-third of people 65 and older have a disability, Jacobsen noted, and dementia (the most costly U.S. health condition) affects 1 in 4 people over the age of 80.

Who will care for all of these older individuals?

In the past, unpaid caregivers have played a huge part, but more and more older people are living alone — away from family members to care for them and in communities that may lack an adequate supply of health care workers or facilities.

The nation’s “elderly support ratio” (the number of people ages 18 to 64 per individuals 65 or older) has been dropping for more than a century, from 13.6:1 in 1900 to 4.1:1 in 2016. It will fall to 2.8:1 by 2030.

States in the Midwest, then, will need to find ways of caring for the elderly with less manpower, thus Jacobsen’s focus on building up the productive capacity of younger people to care for the elderly (as nurses, doctors or home health care aides, for example) or to thrive in other vocations. Their success will help create the tax base for communities to provide more residential facilities and transportation services for the elderly.



But demographic challenges exist among the region’s younger population cohorts as well.

In 2015, for example, the 11-state Midwest lost close to 78,000 college-educated adults to domestic migration (the movement of people within the United States), continuing a longtime trend often referred to as the “brain drain.” (North Dakota was the only state in this region with positive net domestic migration in 2015.)

“The Midwest has a great opportunity in that you have a lot of college graduates, and a lot of those with engineering degrees,” Jacobsen said. “The trick is to figure out how to make it attractive for those graduates to remain [here].”

She also encouraged lawmakers to focus on strategies that close ethnic and racial disparities. On measures such as low birthweights, poverty, access to health insurance and educational attainment, African Americans and Latinos fare worse than whites.

“They’re going to make up a larger concentration of state populations,” Jacobsen said.

Across all ethnic and racial groups, too, fewer children are living in two-parent families — 69 percent in 2016 vs. 85 percent in 1970.

Article written by Tim Anderson, CSG publications manager. He can be reached at tanderson@cs.org.

Enten: What happened in 2016? What’s likely to happen in 2018, 2020?

Harry Enten, senior political writer and analyst for the website *FiveThirtyEight*, shared observations on the 2016 election, some thoughts about the now-nigh 2018 midterm election, and — at some audience members’ requests — early thoughts on 2020.

2016: How the polls got it wrong

According to Enten, polls leading up to last year’s presidential election ended up being so wrong because they didn’t catch non-college-educated whites — at a time when educational attainment has become a major dividing line in our political life.

Donald Trump won this part of the electorate over, and even Republicans based in urban centers such as New York City and Washington, D.C., missed this trend because most of them are college-educated.

Last year’s election also showed that Democrats face an “age gap” among their voters: Younger voters who came of age after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 don’t have the traditional fear of the word “socialism,” which helps explain the appeal of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. But African-Americans remain the party’s base, Enten said, not supporters of Sanders.

Trump and Hillary Clinton were historically bad candidates from a popularity standpoint — “Is this the best that our country could do?” Enten asked — but the rise of Trump and Sanders also shows that “America is willing to listen to anything as long as it has an interesting face.”

And despite Trump’s comments about women, minorities and immigrants, he won a bigger percentage of African-American and Latino voters than Mitt Romney did in 2012. “Don’t make assumptions about him or who might support him,” Enten said.



Harry Enten, senior political writer and analyst for the closely watched website *FiveThirtyEight*, talks politics at this year’s Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

2018: Advantage Democrats

The sitting president’s party has historically fared poorly in midterm elections, a fact that has Democrats hopeful that they will gain seats in the 2018 state and federal elections.

Since the Civil War, there have been only three midterm elections in which the president’s party did not lose U.S. House seats; the average loss is 30 seats. When the president’s approval rating is below 50 percent, the loss of seats is even greater, Enten noted. Democrats need 24 to gain control of the U.S. House.

In addition, a “fairly high correlation” exists between a generic polling question to voters on a congressional race (“Will you vote for the Democrat or the Republican?” without naming specific candidates) and actual results. As of mid-July, that generic congressional ballot favors Democrats by six to seven points.

Though he said Democratic control of the U.S. House is probable after 2018, Enten expects fewer partisan changes in the U.S. Senate. Many of those races next year are in Republican-leaning states, and many incumbents get elected anyway. Enten is projecting a swing, in either direction, of only one or two seats.

“I expect gridlock will continue,” he added.

Between now and 2020, much attention will be paid to state-level races that determine which parties control legislatures and governors’ offices — and, as a result, the nation’s redistricting maps. Next year, 36 gubernatorial elections will be held, including every Midwestern state except Indiana and North Dakota.

Nationally, Enten said the map “looks pretty gosh-darn good for Democrats. ... What we should see are some losses on the Republican side in gubernatorial races.”

2020: Too early to tell much

Enten said he’s reluctant to predict anything about the 2020 presidential election at this point. The 2016 election was unusual because it was clear, even at the same point in that cycle, that the Democrats were going to nominate Clinton. For 2020, he said, who knows?

“I don’t really dismiss anyone at this particular time ... It’s the most wide-open Democratic field since 1992.”

But whoever runs against Trump, he or she will need a coherent message that goes beyond “I’m not him.” Without that message, Enten said, Trump could win re-election.

Article written by Jon Davis, policy analyst and assistant editor for CSG Midwest. He can be reached at jdavis@cs.org.

Ohio Sen. Cliff Hite

Still known as “Coach” among many constituents, longtime educator has become state and regional leader during 10-year legislative career

by Ilene Grossman (igrossman@csg.org)

When you first meet Ohio Sen. Cliff Hite, it won't take long to figure out that he was a high school coach.

He is an outgoing man with an enthusiasm that touches everyone he meets, and in the northwest Ohio region that he has represented for 10 years, Sen. Hite is still known as “Coach” among many of his constituents.

Others remember him as their history and government teacher. He taught for 30 years, and after he retired, Hite's former students were among those hoping that he would run for an open seat in the Ohio House. After all, it was a way to give back to the community — a message that Hite had been imparting to young people for decades.

“I always thought that teaching was giving back, but evidently my students didn't,” Hite jokes about their encouragement that he run for office.

Along with these nudges to run, Hite says politics “was just in the DNA” for him and his family. It was the center of many dinner table discussions among his parents (both of whom were teachers) and three older siblings. Growing up, Hite had three older sisters; two were Democrats, and he and the other sister were Republicans. While they argued all the time, they loved each other.

Hite figured that's how politics worked. After years of thinking about American government and a career of teaching it, Hite has spent the last 10 years in the legislative arena. He shared his unique perspective, and discussed some of his legislative accomplishments and his state's policy challenges, in a recent interview with CSG Midwest.

Q: What did you learn when you came to the Ohio General Assembly that you didn't expect?

A: When I got to Columbus, I thought I should go back to my students and tell them there is a little more to politics and government than we tell them in our textbooks. Not that the difference was bad or good; it was just much more involved than I thought. The negotiations to get a bill passed are very important. That's the good thing about what I did for a living; I enjoy interacting with all kinds of people and being a part of the process.

Q: How has your experience as a football player and a coach impacted your approach to working with your legislative colleagues?

A: As a coach, you are always in the fray. In politics, there are times when a group is flailing on an issue and they need a coach. They need someone to bring them together and remind them where they need to go to get the result they want. I am called on to do that many times — to help people work out their differences and get on the same page. That's what you have to do as a football coach, and to be a successful legislator.

Bio-sketch of Ohio Sen. Cliff Hite

- ✓ elected to Ohio House in 2006; joined state Senate in 2011
- ✓ serves as chair of Ohio Senate Agriculture Committee
- ✓ 2008 graduate of CSG Midwest's Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development; served as co-chair of BILLD Steering Committee for four years
- ✓ serves as first vice chair of CSG's Midwestern Legislative Conference; will become chair in 2018
- ✓ retired teacher and coach; member of the Hancock County Sports Hall of Fame
- ✓ he and his wife, Diane, have three grown children and four granddaughters



Q: How would you describe your style as a legislator and your approach to working with constituents?

A: I have always felt it is not who is right but what's right. I will work with anyone to get something done. I make it a point to have friends on both sides of the aisle. But sometimes I turn into Coach Hite, and people can be surprised by that. I get frustrated when we can't accomplish something.

I think my constituents find that I am accessible and will talk to them, no matter what, even if they are unbelievably upset about something. I will let them say their peace and let them know where I stand.

Q: What legislation have you sponsored that you are most proud of and why?

A: I lost a niece to bacterial meningitis when she was 4 years old, and I worked to get required vaccinations for schoolchildren [for meningococcal disease]. The legislation, known as Tessa's Law [SB 121, passed in 2015], will make a huge difference. It was very difficult for me to testify for the bill, but it will help to save lives. Even as the bill was being discussed, it helped to get the word out about vaccinations.

Q: What do you believe are some of the biggest challenges ahead for the Ohio General Assembly?

A: I would say our biggest challenge is education. There are too many people who want to change things all the time, and we lack consistency. The kids are suffering from that, and so are the teachers and administrators, and even school boards.

We have over-tested kids and over-penalized teachers, and we've got to get back to allowing the creativity of our individuals that are in education to flourish. We've stymied that creativity in favor of accountability. Being a teacher or administrator is a tough job, tougher than it has ever been, and there aren't enough people who understand what it's like to be in a school or a classroom.

Everyone thinks they are an expert on education because they went to school. If they understood all the requirements that are thrown at teachers, and the regulations, we might be able to allow these teachers to continue with the passion that got them into the classroom in the first place. We've got to fix this, and that is one of my goals in the next few years. ★

As 2018 chair of MLC, Sen. Hite will help lead planning for meeting in Manitoba

Ohio Sen. Cliff Hite has long been an active leader in CSG's Midwestern Legislative Conference — the nonpartisan association of all legislators from 11 U.S. states and four affiliate provinces.

Next year, he will take over as MLC chair, and among his duties will be helping plan the group's 73rd Annual Meeting. It will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, marking the third time that an MLC Annual Meeting has been held in a Canadian province.

“The networking with so many different people from so many places exposes you to a lot of good ideas, and you can bring some of these ideas back to your state,” Hite says.

“The MLC meeting and programs like BILLD [a legislative leadership program of the MLC] help give you the confidence that you can do things in your state as a legislator. The meeting participants are ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and you can be a part of that if you listen, take notes and interact. The process is invigorating.”



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State leads on getting lead out

Under new Illinois law, many schools and day care centers must test water; communities will inventory lead service lines

by Illinois Rep. Sonya Harper (repsonyaharper@gmail.com)

I was sitting in a House committee in Springfield around this time last year when I received the news that 26 schools in Chicago had just tested positive for high levels of lead in their drinking water. What caught my attention the most was that my daughter's school was named in the headline of the news story as topping the list of schools with lead-contaminated water.

I immediately forwarded the article to my mother at home in Chicago, and told her to not allow my daughter to continue to drink the school water or eat any food the school prepared. My daughter was also to take her own bottled water and lunch every day. Things have been like that ever since.

Going through this experience and others is why sponsoring SB 550 was so important to me. The legislation, which was signed into law earlier this year, requires certain schools in the state of Illinois to test for lead in their potable water sources (see article below for details).

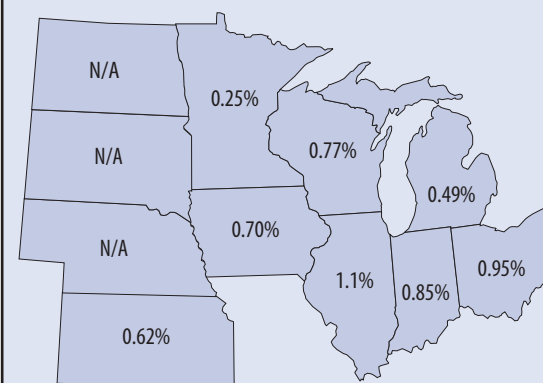
I was no stranger to issues with lead. I grew up in the Greater Englewood neighborhood of Chicago, which has some of the highest levels of lead poisoning in the state. We are known nationwide for our gun violence and other social ills, but I am certain that the environmental factors, pollutants and physical infrastructure of our cities, villages and neighborhoods also have a profound effect on our health, quality and length of life.

Lead poses multiple dangers

Lead can be found in older homes that used lead-based paint, have contaminated soil or have drinking water pumped through leaded pipes. No amount of lead is safe, and it can cause brain damage in children and adults. Any exposure can lead to a lower IQ, ADHD, hearing problems, stunted growth, or digestive and reproductive problems.

My community is home to grass-roots nonprofit

% of Midwestern children under 6 testing for high lead levels in blood



* A high lead level is defined as 10 micrograms per deciliter or more. Data collection methods vary from state to state. Rates are for the year 2015, except for Iowa and Kansas, where the last available data were for 2012. No statistics are available for Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota; those three states have not been part of the national surveillance system. Over the past two decades, the percentage of children testing for high levels of lead has dropped significantly across the Midwest and country.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

organizations such as Imagine Englewood If, which for the past 10 years have been training residents and parents on ways to prevent lead poisoning and ways to detect it in homes, soil and water.

While I am proud of the hard work they do, there is no way they can fulfill all of the educational, identification and mitigation needs of our community based on their current capacity. States and local governments must find more ways to educate people on environmental concerns such as lead, clean air and water and then work swiftly to remediate areas where people are obviously showing signs of illnesses resulting from these environmental issues.

While I was not happy to see that my child's school had high levels of lead in some of its water sources, I was happy that Chicago Public Schools was proactive and decided to test its schools even before this legislation was introduced. After seeing what

happened to our neighbors in Flint, Mich., Chicago was not about to let the status of our children's drinking water go unknown, especially knowing the detrimental and irreparable effects of lead poisoning.

Lead in water or in soil speaks to the larger issues of environmental justice that many communities like mine across the country have been dealing with for generations. In most places across the state and country, ethnic minorities and/or those of a certain socioeconomic status tend to inhabit areas with a greater number of environmental concerns. You will notice in these areas that people, especially children, suffer from high rates of ailments such as respiratory illnesses like asthma, lead poisoning and others.

Next step: Paying for mitigation

It is up to our states to help local communities deal with these serious environmental concerns. Every day we should be asking ourselves: How can we pass better laws and policies that will ensure all of our children a fair chance to grow up healthy by allowing them to breathe clean air and eat food that was grown and prepared with clean, lead-free water?

Today my daughter's school has either fixed or permanently disconnected the fountains and sinks that were found to have lead contamination above the EPA action level of 15 parts per billion. This is a school district where 80 percent of the children are economically disadvantaged. I know everyone can't afford to bring a bag lunch and bottled water to school each day, so that means we still have a lot of work to do.

I commend my colleagues for helping me pass SB 550 in order to get the testing done at all schools in Illinois, but now we have to figure out how we pay for any mitigation that might be needed for schools that test positive. I look forward to working on that in the near future with the continued assistance of grass-roots community organizations such as Imagine Englewood If and dedicated advocacy groups such as the Illinois Environmental Council.

Not only are we to be good servants of the people, but also good stewards of this Earth that houses and takes care of the people. Paying close attention to issues dealing with the environment and public health helps us do just that. ★

Rep. Sonya Harper is a Democrat from Chicago.

Requirements of SB 550, Illinois' recently enacted lead-testing law

- School buildings built before 2000 that serve 10 or more children in grades pre-K through 5, whether public, private, charter, or nonpublic day or residential institutions, will need to test each source of potable water for lead. Those sources include taps, faucets, drinking fountain, and classroom wash basins as well as food-preparation water sources, but janitorial sinks and basins are excluded.

- The water to be tested is to be the first draw of water that has been standing in pipes for at least 8 hours but not more than 18 hours. If a sample exceeds 5 parts per billion, the school is to promptly notify parents and legal guardians of the location in the school where that sample was taken. Note that this level is below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's lead action level of 15 ppb.

- Schools built before 1987 are to conduct testing by Dec. 31, 2017. Schools built from 1987 to 1999 are to be tested by Dec. 31, 2018. The state will determine by June 30, 2019, if schools built from 2000 onward will need to conduct lead testing as well.

- Licensed day care centers, day care homes and group day care homes built before 2000 that serve children under the age of 6 will need to test drinking water for lead based on rules that will be in place by Jan. 1, 2018. Those rules are to include testing requirements, training requirements and notification of results.

- Community water systems are to complete a comprehensive inventory of lead service lines in their system by April 15, 2018, and update that information annually. Such systems are also to notify potentially affected residences of construction or repair work on water mains, lead service lines or water meters that could potentially increase lead levels in drinking water. Notification is not required if the inventory shows that the water system being worked on is lead-free.

Submissions welcome

This page is designed to be a forum for legislators and constitutional officers. The opinions expressed on this page do not reflect those of The Council of State Governments or the Midwestern Legislative Conference. Responses to any FirstPerson article are welcome, as are pieces written on other topics. For more information, contact Tim Anderson at 630.925.1922 or tanderson@csg.org.

Iowa hosts largest gathering of Midwest’s legislators

CSG’s nonpartisan MLC Annual Meeting promotes information sharing and collaboration among states, provinces

Close to 500 state and provincial lawmakers, their guests, and others came to Iowa’s capital city in July to take part in the premier event for the region’s legislators.

The Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting has been held every year since 1945. Its goal is to provide participants with the opportunity to collaborate with one another while also learning from leading policy experts and hearing from highly renowned speakers — all in a welcoming, nonpartisan setting. The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC.

Led by Sen. Janet Petersen, chair of the MLC, Iowa’s legislators planned the four-day event and hosted their legislative colleagues. At this year’s meeting:

- Each of the MLC’s six interstate policy committees met (see pages 2, 3 and 4 for details on those committees and their sessions).
- A plenary session was held on Sen. Petersen’s MLC Chair’s Initiative, which is focusing on state strategies to ensure healthy birth outcomes (see cover story).
- Featured speakers included political writer Harry Enten of FiveThirtyEight (see page 7) and Bill Eggers, who spoke about the power of technology to reshape state governments (see page 6).



Illinois Sen. Donne Trotter and Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen explore the art of legislative negotiations during a professional development workshop held on the final day of this year’s MLC Annual Meeting. Petersen oversaw the July event as MLC chair; Trotter served as MLC chair in 2006. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

- A keynote presentation by Pulitzer Prize winner Isabel Wilkerson examined the enduring impact of the 20th century’s Great Migration ; it was followed by a session on current demographic trends in the Midwest (see page 7).
- Legislators explored key trends in state budget and tax policy (see page 6).
- Attendees took part in a professional development workshop on legislative negotiation.

At the MLC Annual Meeting, legislators adopted 7 policy resolutions that ...

- 1) **Urge passage of a new farm bill** that includes a “size and crop neutral insurance program,” provides for agricultural research and a strong conservation program, supports the development of bio-based energy sources, and includes a domestic hunger and nutrition safety net
- 2) **Call for full federal funding** of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- 3) **Support open and reciprocal trade** in North America
- 4) **Seek greater integration of U.S.-Canada energy markets** and an improved cross-border energy infrastructure
- 5) **Encourage the federal government to modernize the Soo Locks** at Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.
- 6) **Recognize the importance of federalism**
- 7) **Endorse the relationship** between the MLC states and Taiwan

Sharing Capitol Ideas: Photos from the 2017 MLC Annual Meeting



Indiana Sen. Karen Tallian asks a question of keynote speaker Isabel Wilkerson.



Illinois Rep. Elaine Nekritz, Illinois Rep. Norine Hammond and Kansas Rep. Carolyn McGinn participate in the Midwest Legislative Conference Executive Committee meeting.



A large delegation of members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba took part in this year’s Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. Next year, these provincial legislators will serve as hosts when the MLC Annual Meeting is held in Manitoba’s capital city of Winnipeg. The meeting will run from July 15-18.

(all photos on this page: Jeffrey Kash)



Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author Isabel Wilkerson delivers the keynote address on the enduring impact of the Great Migration of African-Americans in the 20th century.



South Dakota Sen. Jim Bolin (right) discusses education policy as Michigan Sen. Goeff Hansen looks on.

The Council of State Governments was founded in 1933 as a national, nonpartisan organization to assist and advance state government. The headquarters office, in Lexington, Ky., is responsible for a variety of national programs and services, including research, reference publications, innovations transfer, suggested state legislation and interstate consulting services. The Midwestern Office supports several groups of state officials, including the Midwestern Legislative Conference, an association of all legislators in 11 states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. The Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan are MLC affiliate members.

Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg nominated to join national leadership team at CSG

Bipartisan group of legislators made choice in July at MLC Annual Meeting

Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg has been chosen by a bipartisan group of her legislative peers from the Midwest to

join the national leadership team of The Council of State Governments, the nation's only organization serving all three branches of government.

CSG's Midwestern Legislative Conference Executive Committee selected Rep. Ballweg at its July 9 meeting in Des Moines, Iowa.

"We are excited to have our colleague, Rep. Joan Ballweg of Wisconsin, represent the Midwest region on the national level," says Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen, current chair of the MLC.

"Rep. Ballweg knows the importance of bringing legislators together in a nonpartisan way to learn from each other and work on initiatives that advance the common good."

A member of the Wisconsin Assembly since 2005, Rep. Ballweg serves as co-chair of the Legislature's Joint Committee for Review of

Administrative Rules, is a founder and co-chair of the Wisconsin Legislative Children's Caucus, and has long been a legislative leader on issues ranging from agriculture and the economy to higher education and homeland security.

"CSG stands to benefit greatly with Rep. Ballweg on the national leadership team," Wisconsin Assembly Speaker Robin Vos says.

"She's a proven leader who has extensive legislative knowledge and is committed to bipartisan collaboration."

In 2016, Ballweg served as chair of the MLC and helped raise awareness among the Midwest's legislators about state policies to enhance child

well-being, strengthen families and improve long-term outcomes.

CSG's national Executive Committee will consider her nomination in December.

If this nomination is approved, she would become CSG vice chair in 2018 and be in line to be CSG chair-elect in 2019 and CSG chair in 2020.



Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg participates in July at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Executive Committee meeting, along with Wisconsin Rep. Eric Genrich (left). At that meeting, the committee nominated Rep. Ballweg to be an officer of The Council of State Governments. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)

Michigan Sen. Ken Horn elected to become next officer of Midwestern Legislative Conference

Michigan Sen. Ken Horn will soon become an officer of the Midwestern Legislative Conference after being elected to the position by fellow legislators at this summer's MLC Annual Meeting in Des Moines, Iowa.

A member of the Michigan Legislature since 2007, Sen. Horn currently serves as chair of the state Senate Economic Development and International Investment Committee and as vice chair of the Transportation Committee. While in the Michigan House, he was chair of the Energy & Technology and Insurance committees.

He also has long been active in the MLC, a non-partisan association of state and provincial lawmakers that facilitates regional cooperation, information sharing and leadership training. In addition to being a 2007 graduate of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, Sen. Horn is co-chair of the MLC's Economic Development Committee and a member of its Executive Committee.

The MLC is led by four committee officers (which rotate on an annual basis), and on the final day of the group's four-day meeting in Des Moines, the Midwest's legislators elected Horn to serve as second vice chair.

With his selection, Sen. Horn is in line to serve as MLC chair in 2020, when the group meets in Michigan. In 2018, the other three MLC officers will be:

- Ohio Sen. Cliff Hite, chair;
- Illinois Rep. Elgie Sims, first vice chair; and
- Iowa Sen. Janet Petersen, immediate past chair.

Staff support for the MLC is provided by the Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments.

CSG is the nation's only organization serving the executive, judicial and legislative branches of state government. It offers regional, national and international opportunities for state officials to collaborate, develop leadership skills and create problem-solving partnerships.



Shown here at this year's Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting, Michigan Sen. Ken Horn is a 10-year veteran of the Legislature. He will join the four-member leadership team of the MLC later this year. (photo: Jeffrey Kash)



CALENDAR

UPCOMING MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE AND THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS EVENTS

GREAT LAKES LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS MEETING

September 22-23, 2017
Toronto, Ontario

Contact: Lisa Janairo (ljanaairo@csg.org)
920.458.5910
greatlakeslegislators.org

MIDWEST INTERSTATE PASSENGER RAIL COMMISSION MEETING

October 9-11, 2017
Wichita, Kansas

Contact: Laura Kliever (lkliever@csg.org)
630.935.1922
miprc.org

CSG NATIONAL CONFERENCE

December 14-16, 2017
Las Vegas, Nevada

Contact: Kelley Arnold (karnold@csg.org)
859.244.8000
csg.org

73RD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

July 15-18, 2018
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Contact: Gail Meyer (gmeyer@csg.org)
630.925.1922
csgmidwest.org

24TH ANNUAL BOWHAY INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (BILLD)

August 10-14, 2018
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Contact: Laura Tomaka (ltomaka@csg.org)
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Eleven new Wisconsin laws take aim at state’s opioid epidemic

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker signed 11 bills into law in July that seek to address myriad facets of the state’s opioid crisis. The bills were the product of a special session held earlier in the year.

According to the the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, school employees and volunteers, along with residence hall directors, will now be protected from lawsuits if they administer drugs designed to treat opioid overdoses (SB 1). These individuals must be properly trained and call 911 immediately after administering the drugs.

Other new laws in Wisconsin authorize:

- the opening of a charter school for up to 15 high school students struggling to overcome addiction (AB 6) and funding new training for teachers and other school personnel to identify and help students struggling with mental health, alcohol and drug issues (AB 11);
- spending \$1 million on up to three new regional opioid treatment programs (AB 8) and providing \$63,000 in annual state grants for hospitals to hire more doctors who specialize in addiction (AB 7); and
- providing \$420,000 to the Wisconsin Department of Justice to hire special agents to investigate drug trafficking (AB 10).

Ohio provides path for community colleges to offer four-year degrees

Ohio has become the latest state in the Midwest where community colleges will have the chance to develop and provide bachelor’s degree programs for students.

Under HB 49 (the state’s budget bill), these programs must be limited to applied and technical fields and be approved by Ohio’s chancellor of higher education.

To get the go-ahead, a community college must show that its four-year program has buy-in from a regional industry or area businesses — for example, they agree to offer work-based learning and employment opportunities to students. In addition, the degree must meet a regional workforce need and fill a void not already met by a four-year college.

According to the Community College Bacca-laureate Association, bachelor’s degrees can be conferred by community colleges in five other Midwestern states: **Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota** and **Wisconsin**.

Under the new Ohio law, the state’s chancellor of higher education is required to study whether the community colleges’ new programs improve student outcomes in the workforce and local industries’ ability to secure qualified employees.

Michigan sets rules for retention, release of police camera footage

Michigan legislators gave unanimous approval in July to a bill that sets statewide rules for the retention and release of footage captured on police body cameras.

HB 4427, signed into law in July, takes effect in January. It requires evidentiary recordings to be kept by law enforcement for at least 30 days. Footage related to complaints against a police officer must be retained for three years; any recording that is part of an ongoing criminal investigation must be kept until completion of the legal case.

Also under the new law, camera footage captured in a private place (“a place where an individual may reasonably expect to be safe from casual or hostile intrusion or surveillance”) is exempt from the state’s public records law. However, if the subjects of these recordings want a copy of the footage, law enforcement must provide them with the recordings.

Over the past three years, legislatures in at least six other Midwestern states — **Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota** and **Nebraska** — have passed laws that set guidelines on police use of body cameras and/or public access to the recordings.

Illinois has budget after record-setting impasse; deal includes tax hike

By overriding the veto of Gov. Bruce Rauner, **Illinois** legislators adopted a new budget in July that increases the state’s individual and corporate income taxes.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, **Illinois** had gone a record-setting 736 days without a budget. The legislation raises the state’s individual income tax rate from 3.75 percent to 4.95 percent and the corporate rate from 5.25 percent to 7 percent. Those changes are estimated to bring in an additional \$5 billion in revenue to the state.

Illinois is one of three states in the Midwest with a flat individual income tax. The other two are **Indiana** and **Michigan**, which have rates of 3.23 percent and 4.25 percent, respectively, according to the Tax Foundation. **South Dakota** has no income tax at all. The other seven Midwestern states have graduated-rate income tax structures. **Minnesota** has the highest marginal rate, 9.85 percent, which applies to incomes of over \$156,910 (single filers) or \$209,210 (heads of households).

In addition to the recent actions in Illinois, **Kansas** lawmakers enacted increases to the state’s income tax rates this year as part of a budget fix that also eliminates tax exemptions for businesses that date back to 2012. Those changes required the Legislature to override a veto by Gov. Sam Brownback.